REMARKS:

In the Office Action of January 23, 2006, claims 18-20 and 25-28 were rejected as being obvious over Lynch. The Examiner acknowledges that Lynch does not teach a molded door skin having a bond strength of a least about 2.0 N/mm^2. However, the Examiner states that Applicant fails to show criticality for the claimed bond strength, and therefore concludes that the claimed bond strength would have been an obvious design choice. Applicant disagrees and requests reconsideration in light of the following remarks.

It is an object of the present application to provide a reformed molded door skin that is stronger than a standard molded skin. Specifically, the specification provides: "the reformed molded skin has a bond strength of at least about 2.0 N/mm^2, and preferably a bond strength of at least about 2.5 N/mm^2. This can and is often double the internal bond after processing." See Specification, page 6, lines 14-21. The claimed bond strength is achieved by re-forming a door skin blank according to the disclosed method.

Applicant has amended claim 18 in clarification, which now provides that the molded door skin is a reformed molded wood composite door skin. The present invention is thus directed to a reformed (or post-formed) door skin, as opposed to a conventional molded door skin that is formed from non-solid mats or bats of material. See Specification, page 8, lines 19-22. As described by Applicant, a reformed door skin is formed from a flush solid composite skin that has already been pressed into its flat-skin shape. It is then reformed in order to result in reformed molded skins 7, 9 having an increased bond strength. See Specification, pages 8, lines 22-28.

In addition to the advantages of the increased bond strength (i.e. a stronger panel), providing reformed door skins avoids prior door skin molding procedures. "Thus, molded doors 1 may be made more efficiently and cost effectively, and the resulting door skins may have a strength of more than twice that of standard molded skins [i.e. skins formed from a bat of cellulosic material using conventional techniques], and more than twice that of standard flush or flat skin blanks or flat skin blanks." See Specification, pages 9, lines 3-11.

Note that conventional molded skins do not fall apart if the bond strength is not as high as provided in the claims, as suggested by the Examiner. Specifically, the Examiner states that "it would have been obvious of engineering design choice because the motivation for doing so would have been to provide an appropriate bonded strength for door skin thus preventing the skin would not fallen apart." See Office Action at page 3. A conventional door skin typically has a bond strength of about 1.4 N/mm^2. Such door skins do not fall apart, and may be appropriate for some applications. However, it is desirable for other applications to provide a door skin with increased bond strength, which is an object of the present invention.

Lynch neither discloses nor suggests a door skin having a bond strength of at least about 2.0 N/mm^2, as set forth in amended claim 18. Furthermore, Lynch neither discloses nor suggests a reformed molded wood composite door skin, as claimed by Applicant. Rather, Lynch is directed to a molded core component. Lynch discloses the use of conventional molded door skins, which are formed from a slurry or mat of cellulosic material and resin binder, as noted in the Background of the Invention of the

Lynch patent. By contrast, the present invention seeks to avoid molding procedures resulting in such conventional molded skins. See Specification, page 9, lines 3-6.

Therefore, Applicant submits that the present invention is neither disclosed nor suggested by Lynch or any other references of record. Further, Applicant submits that the specifically claimed bond strength is not merely an obvious design choice. Indeed, the present invention is specifically directed to providing a reformed molded door skin having an improved bond strength.

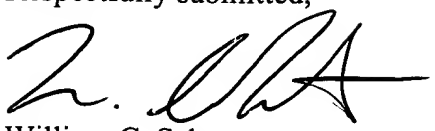
Applicant has amended claims 25-30 to be renumbered as claims 26-31.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of claims 23, 24, 29 and 30, Applicant submits that claims 19-20 and 25-30 (now 25-31) all depend from amended claim 18 and are therefore also allowable for the reasons set forth above. In addition, Thorn fails to disclose or suggest a door skin having a bond strength of at least about 2.0 N/mm^2, as set forth in claim 18 in the present application.

Furthermore, Thorn is directed to a compression molded door assembly that includes door skins formed from sheet molding compound (SMC). One skilled in the art would not look to procedures for forming an SMC door skin when molding wood composite door skins, as noted in the previous response. In addition, the SMC door skins disclosed by Thorn are not reformed, as claimed by Applicant.

Therefore, Applicant submits that all claims are now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits same. It is believed that no fees are due with this submission. Should that determination be incorrect, then please debit Account No. 50-0548 and notify the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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